

The Griffin

CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY

College of
Liberal Arts &
Social Sciences

Department of Political Science
and Public Administration

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Students, faculty and community members attend the Fall 2017 Griffin Policy Forum on the campus of Central Michigan University.

The Griffin

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This issue of *The Griffin* is dedicated to the memory of Maxine Berman, the fourth Griffin Endowed Chair in American Government at Central Michigan University.

Maxine Berman Remembered

**By Nancy Quarles, Adjunct Professor, Central Michigan University
Department of Political Science & Public Administration**

I had the wonderful experience to follow Maxine Berman into the Michigan House of Representatives. I would never say fill her shoes or replace her. Representative Berman was one of a kind.

Max was known as a strong advocate for education and healthcare. She made her mark in these areas. When a group or individuals wanted someone to lead the charge for education or healthcare--Max was the logical choice. But Rep. Berman was a more than a fighter for education, healthcare, and social justice. Max was an author; speaker and her heart was in teaching. Oh, do not let me forget a comedian. Some of Max's best jokes and comical quotes are still flowing around in the Capitol.

Let me mention that Max was quite the mentor. She was always there to answer my questions and give me guidance where needed. I have great appreciation for her works and her outreach to future candidates. I thank her for all she did. I have great admiration for the footprint she left.



Maxine Berman

April 17, 1946 - March 2, 2018

Griffin Endowed Chairs

The following individuals have served as the Robert and Marjorie Griffin Endowed Chairs in American Government at Central Michigan University:

Craig Ruff (2000-2003)

Maxine Berman (2009-2013)

William Ballenger (2003-2007)

Gary Randall (2013-2017)

Gary Peters (2007-2008)

David Rutledge (2017-Present)

Welcome Dean Rothaus

We welcomed Richard Rothaus as dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences following a national search last summer.



Richard Rothaus

Rothaus joins Central Michigan University from the North Dakota University System, where he served as vice chancellor of academic and student affairs (2015-2018) and director of academic programs, research and accreditation from (2014-2015).

In addition to his administrative positions, Rothaus was a research associate at NDSU's Center for Heritage Renewal (2012-2018), acted as a consulting archeologist for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (2006-2014) and as president and principal investigator for Trefoil Cultural and Environmental (2008-2014).

Rothaus taught in the history departments at St. Cloud State University and Oklahoma State University and served as assistant vice president for research and faculty development at St. Cloud State (2000-2008). He earned a doctoral degree in

history from Ohio State University, a master's degree from Vanderbilt University and a bachelor's degree from Florida State University.

As dean, Rothaus leads all operations of the college — which is composed of academic departments, interdisciplinary programs, institutes and centers — and provide leadership for all undergraduate and graduate programs within the college. He also serves on the Council of Deans, Academic Senate and Academic Planning Council.

Mackenzie Flynn Wins Inaugural Maxine Berman Award

Congratulations to Mackenzie Flynn on receiving the inaugural Maxine Berman Academic Achievement Award! Established in 2018 in memory of our former Griffin Endowed Chair Maxine Berman, the award recognizes the academic accomplishments and promise of a student enrolled in one of the seminar courses taught by the Griffin Chair (PSC 300/301).

Mackenzie graduated summa cum laude from CMU in May 2018 with dual degrees in History and Political Science and recently was named recipient of the 2018 CMU Future Alumni Leader Award! As a student at CMU she led a political organization for two years, was active in the CMU Honors Program, and was a student leader in the annual CMU phonathon. She also has volunteered more than 300 hours on various state and federal political campaigns. Mackenzie is attending the Michigan State University College of Law and plans to practice family law or hold a governmental position.

Maxine Berman Scholarship Information:

- The Award recognizes the academic accomplishments and promise of a student enrolled in one or both of the seminar courses taught by the Griffin Chair (PSC 300/301).
- Recipients will embody the qualities epitomized by Maxine Berman's long public service to Michigan and reflect her concerns for social justice.
- Minimum GPA 3.00 on a 4.0 scale.
- The award will be made only if highly qualified applicants apply.
- Nominations are made by the Griffin Chair and, if there are multiple nominees, recipients are selected by the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

Questions should be addressed to David Jesuit at 989-774-2795 or David.Jesuit@cmich.edu.



Mackenzie Flynn

A Champion for Small Towns

James Johnson still has about 24 credits left to complete before he'll graduate from Central Michigan University at the end of 2019, but he's already getting a head start on his dream career.

The political science major from Marion, Michigan, landed a full-time position as a legislative aide in constituent relations with Michigan state Rep. Jason Wentworth — a role that would make his late father proud.

Johnson came to CMU hoping to make a meaningful impact in the lives of others, a calling he picked up from his father. The late George Johnson always told his children how proud he had been to serve as the mayor of Omer, one of Michigan's smallest towns.

Service to his community was one of the hallmarks of his father's life, Johnson said. Before and after his service as mayor, George had been involved on the school board, served as police chief, and held leadership positions on several community and nonprofit organization boards.

"My father told us to always think big and work hard for others. He was always looking for ways to improve our community and considered himself a promoter for our town," Johnson said.

Johnson decided to honor his father's legacy by entering public service — and he wanted to keep it positive and local.

In his political science classes at CMU, Johnson said he often encountered the message that politics should be about problem-solving, not about party divisiveness.

In his class with David Rutledge, he enjoyed hearing speakers from many political perspectives and their emphasis on maintaining civility while seeking solutions together. Rutledge is the Griffin Endowed Chair in American



James Johnson, left, and Rep. Jason Wentworth in the Capitol in Lansing.

Government at CMU and leads the twice-annual Griffin Policy Forums.

And his classes with Sharon Kukla-Acevedo outlined the values of working for change as a public servant at the local, regional and state levels of government. While many people focus on big issues in national politics, Johnson said he was more interested in the day-to-day issues impacting the lives of people in his hometown.

"Issues like road improvements and funding for schools affect every person, in every party, every day," Johnson said.

He contacted his state representative's office and asked for an unpaid internship.

The request impressed Wentworth, an alum of CMU's Master of Science in Administration-Leadership program.

"It is not very common for someone to reach out directly to our office seeking an unpaid internship. James displayed a deep interest in the campaigning process and made clear that he was eager to learn more and help in whatever capacity he could," Wentworth said.

As an intern, Johnson spent hundreds of hours out on the road knocking on thousands of doors — an experience he called a crash course in canvassing.

"At one point I knocked on about 600 doors in four days. I learned that every voice and every vote really matter in an election," he said.

His work on the campaign sent him back to Omer, where he was surprised to meet many people who remembered his father's impact on the community, including a couple whose marriage his father officiated more than three decades ago.

The miles spent on the road, knocking on doors and speaking with voters paid off at the end of 2018 when Wentworth invited him to join his team full-time as a legislative aide in constituent relations.

"James spent hundreds of hours training for the position he now holds, including dealing with complex constituent cases. His hard work, both in the office and on the campaign, earned my trust and confidence that he can excel in this position while finishing his degree," Wentworth said.

And he knows his work is making a difference for the people in his community.

"I help our constituents resolve issues and connect with the right government departments to deliver services they need. It feels great to know I am making a difference in their lives."

Do We Have a Civility Problem?

By David Rutledge, the Robert and Marjorie Griffin Chair in American Government at CMU



David Rutledge

After introductions, I begin my first political science classes of each semester by discussing what I refer to as a Guide for Classroom Civility. Simply stated, my guide holds each student responsible for creating an environment during class that promotes learning, dignity and mutual respect for each other. In setting the tone for classroom decorum, I also place students on notice that some of our classroom discussions will include political issues that can sometimes engender strong views and feelings. While these discussions are an important part of the teaching and learning process, my expectation is that my students will be able to disagree with each other without being disagreeable. I believe that most of us hold the same expectation in our relationships and daily interactions; but what about the decorum among our political leaders?

My assessment of the current national political discourse is that we are experiencing partisanship on steroids.

We can turn on the TV at any time of day or night and see talking heads playing to our fears, or advancing propaganda based on innuendo and misinformation. Rather than promoting the common good, their apparent objective is an attempt to alter public opinion to gain some advantage for a political party. To be clear, I believe that passionately held views and reasoned debate are healthy and should be encouraged. However, fear-mongering and hyped-up propaganda designed to mislead can be insidious and damaging to a democracy. The by-product of this type behavior is usually extreme polarization and unwillingness on the part of political leaders to find common ground. As a result, what we see as citizens is the inability of our elected officials to address critical issues that could advance the common good. There is another negative to the lack of civility among our political leaders. Evidence is emerging that suggests the polarizing behavior of our political leaders may be subliminally affecting our behavior negatively. In the March 14, 2011 issue of the NY Daily News, Corky Siemaszko discusses a Harris Poll that found 72% of respondents believe that how American politicians treat one another influences how American citizens treat one another. The same poll also revealed that a clear 67% majority believes that the political climate is the foulest it has ever been.

Something even more diabolical is playing out in states where there is no balance and one political party controls state government. During Lame Duck Sessions after the 2018 November election in both Wisconsin and Michigan, bills were introduced, and in some cases, passed into law aimed at limiting the power of newly elected officials of a different political party. This type of unprecedented power move

can only serve to exacerbate political polarization and weaken the tenets upon which our democracy is based.

Is there a way to tone down heightened partisanship? Can we return to a more civil discourse where facts and truth control, and the reasonable opinions of others are respected? I believe that my classroom civility guide holds some promising lessons and valuable wisdom for our political leaders—if they would only be open to putting them into action. The edicts of the guide are:

Think before speaking

Focus on facts

Focus on the common good

Disagree respectfully Be open to others without hostility

Respect diverse views/groups

Promote a spirit of collegiality

Give corrective feedback

Political leaders of both major parties need to be reminded from time to time that the survival of our democratic republic is the common goal. Confronting and eliminating toxic political rhetoric in their public discourse is the surest path to a vibrant democratic process and strong republic where the opinions of all are valued and respected.

Many of my students are interested in some form of public service. Equipping them now with the tools that will empower them with the will and courage to engage in political debate with civility and respect is critical both for them and the rest of us.

"Two truths are too often overshadowed in today's political discourse; public service is a most honorable pursuit, and so is bipartisanship." Olympia Snow

Fall 2017 Griffin Forum Review

Borders, Boundaries, and Migration





The 2017 Fall Griffin Policy Forum was held on Monday, October 30th, 2017. This event focused on the topic of Borders, Boundaries, and Migration, a Central Michigan University Political Science department focus. This event, open to the public, invited four of our states leading experts to discuss how this issue impacts our lives locally and nationally.

Tim Skubick, host of WKAR “Off the Record”, was forum moderator. Zoe Clark, Michigan Radio’s Program Director, provided expert perspective from her work overseeing the award-winning newsroom and programming of Michigan’s largest public radio station. Chuck Stokes offered insights as WXYZ-TC/Channel 7 moderator and producer of “Spotlight on the News,” Michigan’s longest-running weekly news and public affairs show. The final panelist, Bill Ballenger, offered analysis as “Michigan’s undisputed Crown Prince of Pundits” and founder of “Inside Michigan Politics.” Two special guests, State Representative Ed Canfield and State Representative Yousef Rabhi also weighed in on the

discussion and offered key insights to the standing room only auditorium.

Highlights of the conversation included discussion of “the wall” and why this was such a large topic in the last presidential election. The dialogue covered thoughts on nationalism, feelings of fear from all sides, concern about a porous system, and lack of action regarding this matter by our government over the last 30 years. A range of ideas were explored offering insight from politicians and pro-immigrant neighborhood rally’s to wide spread worry about illegal immigrants circumventing the current merit-based system.

The panelists offered historical content, federal perspectives, and illustrated state level issues regarding sanctuary cities while engaging the audience with questions and insights. One point that was made raised the question about Lansing and the process the capital city went through to become a sanctuary city and then later rescind the decision. Lansing was the only city to have done

so, nationally. Additional conversation discussed national pressures that seem to be determining local police protocol. Representative Rabhi made the distinction that we should not use the term “illegal,” no human is illegal, undocumented- yes, but we are all, in fact, human.

Finally, the panel mentioned the state’s Gubernatorial election in 2018, ideas surrounding economic justice, the problem of 11 million people “who did not wait in line,” political polarization, and how this issue must ultimately be tackled through bipartisan support. There is a need, per Chuck Stokes, for each of us to pay attention to the political process, our leaders, and that each of our vote counts. He concluded with a sentiment we too work hard to support through the Griffin classes (Whatever those are) ... we need to commit to agreeing on a set of facts and from there dialogue can grow.

Spring 2018 Griffin Forum Review

The Redistricting Dilemma: How the Political Map Determines Elections





The second Griffin Policy Forum event (of the 2017-2018 academic year) was held on April 9, 2018. The Spring Forum focused on gerrymandering as a topic of great concern. This event, titled “The Redistricting Dilemma: How the Political Map Determines Elections,” brought an expert panel to the Central Michigan University campus. The panel included Bernie Porn, Steve Mitchell, and Nathan Inks, all considered industry experts on the topic., Bernie Porn, President of EPIC-MRA which is a leading research and consulting firm focused on public opinion polling; Steve Mitchell is founder of Mitchell Research & Communications which specializes in public affairs, advocacy, market research, political consulting, and political polling nationwide; and Nathan Inks is a Central Michigan University Alumnus and attorney. Nathan has been a long-time advocate of reform in redistricting. He won a 2011 Michigan Center for Election Law redistricting competition. Central Michigan University’s former Griffin Chair Bill Ballenger acted as Moderator.

Steve Mitchell explained how redistricting is the process which

happens every ten years, following the census, to determine (based on the population) the number of congressperson’s and legislators will be elected to represent individual districts. Mitchell believes the current system redistricting work, has been successful for both parties, and was the voice of status quo during this discussion. Bernie Porn described an ideal process that would allow both Democratic and Republican parties an equal chance of winning any district. He describes gerrymandering as an unfortunate process where the controlling political party re-creates the district lines to provide a greater advantage to their own party. Nathan Inks joined the conversation to note that we do not currently adhere to current standards and that is where much of the needed reform should be focused. However, he does believe that the 2018 gerrymandering ballot, which allows citizen control of the process, will likely create more harm than good.

Attending the forum were several vocal proponents for the Michigan gerrymandering ballot initiative.

Many questions during the evening centered on details of why they panel were either for or against this ballot proposal. Bernie Porn, the only panelist for the ballot, explained how both parties were guilty of influencing elections through this technique. Nathan Inks clarified to the audience that how the standards are worded in this specific proposal surrounding such things as compactness, county lines, and nonspecific verbiage such as ‘communities of interest’ would lead to long term issues for the state. He would be in favor of a future bill bringing authority to a citizen’s commission, just not this specific one. Ideally, an algorithm would be used that would take out the ability of human influence for the greater part. Steve Mitchell warns that the ballot plan is not bipartisan and in fact is laden with heavy Democratic influences. This plan, Mitchell continues, will place the power into the hands of individuals who are not experts in this extremely important process. All three panelists agreed that this issue was complex and challenging.

Special Thanks to our Guest Speakers

Each semester the Griffin Endowed Chair hosts guests speakers to meet with students taking the Griffin seminar courses.

Fall 2017 Semester

- October 9: **Paul Stankewicz**
Lobbyist for the Catholic Archdiocese of Michigan
- October 16: **Rep. Tim Kelly** (R) District 94
Home Town: Saginaw. Served on the following committees: Appropriations, Education Reform, Commerce, Financial Services, Oversight, Regulatory Reform, and Tax Policy.
- November 7: **Jennifer Smeltzer**
Owner of CCS Campaign Solutions

Spring 2018 Semester

- January 22: **Rep. Sheldon Neeley** (D) District 34
Home Town: Flint. Served on the following committees: Health Policy, Local Government, Transportation and Infrastructure.
- January 29: **Rep. Jewell Jones** (D) District 11
Home Town: Inkster. Served on the following committees: Communications and Technology, Military and Veterans Affairs, Regulatory Reform.
- February 5: **Rep. Phil Potvin** (R) District 102
Home town: Alpena. Served on the following committees: Appropriations.
- February 26: **Rep. Robert Kosowski** (D) District 16
Home town: Detroit. Served on the following committees: Appropriations, Energy Policy, Insurance, Families, Children, and Seniors, Military and Veterans Affairs, Tourism.
- March 26: **James McBryde**
President and CEO of the Middle Michigan Development Corporation
- April 16: **Rep. Kevin Cotter** (R) District 99
Home Town: Mt. Pleasant. Former Speaker of the House



Director Jennifer Smeltzer



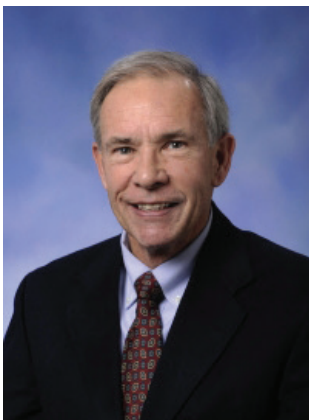
Rep. Tim Kelly



Rep. Sheldon Neeley



Rep. Jewell Jones



Former Rep. Phil Potvin



Rep. Robert Kosowski



James McBryde



Rep. Kevin Cotter

People often look to politics and complain, saying it is all corrupt or regular people are powerless. However, one must remember that the government is not like a person's favorite football team. If there is a bad season or poor moves on the field, a fan has little power to make a difference. But in politics, a group of people does have the ability to change the outcome through voting. Frequent and informed voting is, of course, of utmost importance, but what is even more significant is that people do not shield themselves from politics. Seeing politics as a dirty word does nothing to help with the problems within it.

– Mackenzie, CMU student

I call on you, fellow students, to become engaged. This doesn't mean sacrificing your life for the political system, but rather to start advocating on behalf of special interests in whichever way you can. You can start by being involved in the Student Government Association and make change on campus. That was my first step towards civic involvement. I can't make anyone care about what we call "the issues," but I can express to all students the utter importance of being involved, whether it's now or later in life.

– Jackie, CMU student

I challenge my fellow Central Michigan University students to take a deeper look into politics. You do not need to have a career in politics. As long as you know what is going on and can make an informed decision come election time, you are doing your country a great service. People are always complaining about how bad things keep happening in government and how the wrong people are in office. Just as Gandhi said: 'Be the change you wish to see in the world.'

– Christian, CMU student

Coming to see the system as a tool that can be used to your benefit, rather than a hindrance, will allow any citizen the ability to better navigate the power structure with an ease that will benefit them in fulfilling the responsibilities of citizenry. Getting to know the election process at a local level is essential to knowing the language and responsibility that is imparted on all of us when we come together as free citizens to cast our vote to shape our communities.

– Kevin, CMU student

We, as students of this university, as citizens of our country have the full right to participate in governing. If you are not satisfied with how your university, township, or government is working, you have the authority to inflict change! I encourage all of you to be more politically engaged. Research who your local legislators and politicians are and learn how to get in touch with them. Attend a town hall meeting or city council meeting and make your voice heard. Identify issues you care about and positively change the world you live in.

– Chris, CMU student



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